

## AN ALBINO LESSER SNOW GOOSE IN MANITOBA

BY J. DEWEY SOPER

TO Mr. A. Haak, Norwood, Manitoba, goes the credit for making the unusually interesting discovery of an albino Lesser Snow Goose (*Chen hyperborea hyperborea*). This occurred on April 24, 1939, as he was studying and photographing Blue and Lesser Snow Geese a few miles northeast of Meadows, Manitoba. This locality lies well within the celebrated concentration area where these birds feed and rest in prodigious numbers during the spring migration from Louisiana to the Arctic.

On this particular day, geese were disposed in dense masses on the sodden lowlands. Mr. Haak, from the confines of a blind, was intent upon securing some good flight pictures of the birds as they shifted in restless detachments about the district. Finally, in early afternoon the best opportunity presented when flocks passed within close range. A very small group contained the pure white individual referred to, which is assumed to be an albino Lesser Snow, rather than a Blue Goose (*Chen caerulescens*). One of the resulting "shots" was the exceptionally attractive photograph herewith reproduced, showing the albino at the lower right; it looks strangely immaculate in such spotless garb, brightly illuminated by the afternoon sun. As will be realized, the only Lesser Snow Goose diversion from the normal which would arise from albinism is the lack of black primaries in the wings.

Mr. Haak informs me that this is the only albino goose of the kind which he has ever seen, though hundreds of thousands of typical Blues and Lesser Snows have come under his scrutiny during successive periods of migration. Other Manitoba naturalists have also had very extensive experience along these lines without, to my knowledge, seeing a pure white goose. My personal observation has collectively embraced vast numbers of these birds on the Arctic breeding grounds, and during the Manitoba migrations, without detecting a single albino. I have been unable to find any reference in the literature to such an individual, previously seen and recorded. All of this would seem to conclusively indicate that albinism is extremely rare in either of these species and that an individual, such as is shown in the photograph, is but one in millions.

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